

MARAD Artifacts Shine on Kennedy Center Stage

By Susan Clark



The set of Mr. Roberts at the Kennedy Center's Eisenhower Theater, featuring many artifacts from MARAD

"Neil, we have hit the mother lode!" said Kennedy Center prop man Larry Barrett as he walked into the MARAD warehouse in Chesapeake, Virginia. He and production manager Neil Fleitell had traveled to Chesapeake in search of nautical props and scenery for the Kennedy Center's production of *Mr. Roberts*, which is set on board a Navy ship during World War II.

MARAD supplied the 1500-pound winch, which was actually used during the production to move prop cargo. "Funny thing is," says Fleitell, "I asked Don Powell to show me the SMALLEST winch. That warehouse is amazing!"

Powell, who runs the South Atlantic Region Shore-based Spares Warehouse, said the Kennedy Center crew borrowed not only the winch, but also superstructure including a bulkhead door, as well as cargo blocks, binoculars, pilot's ladders, a ship's bell, and an

Engine Order Telegraph, which, he said, "They shined up real well." Powell also said that when the items were returned, the Kennedy Center crew accounted for every item they borrowed, which he appreciated.

In expressing his thanks, Fleitell wrote, "I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you and a job well done to all of you at the Maritime Administration for your invaluable assistance. We could not have done it without you!"

Production carpenter Jerry Ryan enters the stage through an actual bulkhead door from MARAD's warehouse in Chesapeake, Virginia

